



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **One Stop Solution for Rural Housing Information**

GUELPH, ON, March 12, 2024 – The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI), Western Ontario Wardens Caucus (WOWC), and South Central Ontario Region Economic Development Corporation (SCOR EDC) announce the launch of the Rural Housing Information System (RHIS) to rural Western Ontario municipalities.

The RHIS, originally developed in collaboration with the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus (EOWC), has expanded its reach to include the entirety of rural Western Ontario, in addition to Ontario's South Central Region. This expansion reflects significant inroads towards addressing housing challenges in rural areas. In addition, the RHIS will further expand to include the rural municipalities of Northern Ontario in 2024.

The Rural Housing Information System is open to Municipal staff, and they are encouraged to sign up at <https://www.ruralontariohousing.ca/>. In the coming months, ROI will be further promoting the site to builders and developers to see more affordable housing developments in rural municipalities of Ontario.

“Currently, in rural Ontario, there is a shortage of salient housing data. A lack of adequate data is a barrier to the planning and construction of affordable housing in rural regions,” says Kezia Cowtan, Rural Housing Information System Project Manager at ROI.

“As a partner organization, we recognize the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing the housing crisis. RHIS is a significant step in the right direction, and we are proud to be associated with an organization that is at the forefront of positive change.” says Kimberly Earls, Executive Director SCOR.

“The Western Ontario Wardens’ Caucus has identified that the region will require 173,000 new housing units by 2041. The Rural Housing Information System is designed to provide essential data to home builders, ensuring informed decisions for the construction of these units. The RHIS is committed to emphasizing rural data, acknowledging the unique needs of our rural communities. It underscores the importance of hearing the rural voice, as rural housing requirements differ significantly from those in large cities.” says Kate Burns Gallagher, Executive Director, Western Ontario Wardens’ Caucus.



The Rural Housing Information System leverages data through a user-friendly and automated dashboard, encompassing:

- Demographic and economic trends, including population statistics, growth patterns, age distributions, and income data.
- Comprehensive information on average home prices and market rental rates.
- Identification of available zoned land suitable for multi-dwelling housing development.
- Exploration of available incentives, including municipal grants or other incentives supporting housing initiatives.
- A detailed inventory of housing assets and amenities within the region.
- The capability to compare housing data among different municipalities, facilitating informed decision-making.

As the tool grows, there are opportunities for expanding data collection by engaging multiple stakeholders across the province. This growth in data collection will enhance the RHIS's capacity to provide a more thorough and inclusive understanding of housing dynamics, supporting the creation of affordable housing.

“In the medium to long-term, information available through the RHIS will be used to appropriately strategize housing development plans, bring suitable affordable housing to the region and keep residents in their communities of choice,” says Ellen Sinclair, ROI Executive Director.

This rural housing project is funded through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Housing Supply Challenge and Ontario Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Rural Affairs – Rural Economic Development Program.



## ABOUT

The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) is a non-profit organization committed to developing leaders, informing decision makers and connecting communities. ROI delivers the renowned Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) entering its 40th year of operation, and the Rural Change Maker program, a youth leadership initiative for young rural, emerging leaders to address local priorities. We provide data research and analysis on rural trends and demographics. Information is disseminated in our Rural Ontario Facts products - factsheets and accompanying dashboards. Currently, ROI is engaged in a rural housing initiative that helps communities to address the housing and homelessness crisis being faced by thousands of Ontarians.

## ASSOCIATED LINKS

[RURAL HOUSING INFORMATION SYSTEM](#)

[RURAL ONTARIO INSTITUTE](#)

[WESTERN ONTARIO WARDEN'S CAUCUS](#)

[SOUTH CENTRAL ONTARIO REGION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION](#)

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